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Kernan Announces New Tourism Ad Will Air During IU's Final Four Game Saturday

Twenty Indiana travel organizations support high visibility commercial

INDIANAPOLIS — Most of Indiana will be watching Saturday night's NCAA Final Four matchup that pits Indiana University against Oklahoma University. And some of those viewers will not only be treated to a great basketball game, they'll also get a look at a new commercial touting the state's tourist attractions.

Lt. Governor Joe Kernan announced today that a new television spot created by the Indiana Department of Commerce's Tourism and Film Development Division will air on Indianapolis' WISH-TV during the IU-OU game this weekend. The game tips off at 6:07 eastern time on March 30.

"In the midst of what's sure to be a victory for IU, we'll be proudly unveiling a new ad that encourages Hoosiers to travel *within* their home state," said Kernan, who heads the Department of Commerce. "It's an opportunity to reach a broad Indiana audience that we couldn't pass up."

The television spot, which features the message "How far do you really have to travel to bring back a smile?", made its debut to the tourism industry at the Hoosier Hospitality Conference this week in Indianapolis. At the conference, the Tourism Division announced that it had researched the possibility of running the commercial during the game Saturday night, but placement costs were beyond the division's means.

The industry immediately rallied its troops. Within 24 hours, 20 organizations statewide had pledged 82 percent of the funds necessary to make airing the commercial possible. Contributing organizations include convention & visitors bureaus, attractions, restaurants, and even a golf course. The Tourism Division will contribute the balance to complete the buy.

"This ad has the potential to reach 2.5 million households in central Indiana," said Kernan. "I cannot say thank you enough to the organizations that stepped up to the line and hit the crucial shot that made this happen. They are to be commended for their dedication to the success of the tourism industry."

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While Indiana's tourism industry has suffered in the last year due to the economic downturn, national research indicates that citizens remain receptive to and comfortable with close-to-home travel experiences. To take advantage of this trend, the Indiana Tourism Division will place the ad in additional time slots beginning the third week of April and running through June on 30 stations in seven Indiana markets plus Cincinnati and Louisville.

Years of Tourism Division research shows that tourism advertising has a substantial return on investment. According to the 2001 Conversion Research Report conducted by Strategic Marketing and Research, visitors spend \$108 in Indiana communities for every one dollar the state spends on advertising. Of that \$108, the state realizes \$5.40 in sales tax alone. Based on this statistic, the \$17,000 investment to air this one television commercial could generate more than \$1.8 million in visitor spending and nearly \$92,000 in sales tax revenues for the state.

Hirons & Company, the marketing communications agency of record for the Tourism Division, produced the television commercial. To keep production budgets to a minimum, the spot was put together without the expense of location shoots. Using photographs and vintage home movies submitted from Indiana residents statewide, the agency created a montage of images that remind residents of the many great Indiana travel experiences they can find close to home.

Organizations contributing to the Final Four television ad placement are:

The Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Association
LaPorte County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Southern Indiana Regional Marketing Cooperative
The Sunnyside of Louisville (Clark & Floyd County Convention & Visitors Bureau)
Hendricks County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Steuben County Convention & Visitors Bureau
South Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau
Dearborn County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Switzerland County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Harrison County Convention & Visitors Association
Rising Sun Convention & Visitors Bureau
Indiana Historical Society
Red Geranium Enterprises
Das Dutchman Essenhaus
Jackson County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Ripley County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Madison Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Marengo Caves
Walnut Creek Golf Course
Historic Landmarks Foundation

The Indiana Department of Commerce's Tourism and Film Development Division stimulates visitor spending and economic growth by developing and promoting quality travel experiences in Indiana. The most recent economic impact study shows that the Indiana tourism industry supports more than 107,000 full-time jobs, generates more than \$6.1 billion in visitor spending annually and attracts more than 53 million visitors each year.